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SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT

On the 10th. day of January 1701;

BY THE

Lord Belhaven,

On the Affair of the Indian and African Com-
pany, and its Colony of Caledonia.

Nonne mori satius, vitæ quam ferre pudorem? Claud. Hor.
Pluris opes nunc sunt, quam præci temporis annis: Ovid.

EDINBURGH, Printed in the Year, 1701.



To the Reader.

BEing obliged, at the desire of several Noble and worthy Members of Parliament, to Print this Discourse, I hope those, who heard me, will not be offended, if they find it not exactly in the very precise Words and Sentences as I spoke it; because I must acknowledge, I did not design it for the Press, having never so much as taken Notes of the Heads thereof, before I spoke it in Parliament: Yet this I can say, it is materially the same, without either Addition or Diminution, yea much the same Words, if I remember well.

A Speech in Parliament, on the 10th day of
January 1701, by the Lord Belhaven, &c..

My Lord Chancellour,

WE have here before us the important Affair of our *Indian* and *African Company* and *Caledonia*. The Company's several Representations and Petitions to this Honourable House, which give us a very distinct, tho' melancholy account of that Affair, the Addresses from most of the Shires and Burghs of the Nation to this Parliament, together with the Parliamentary and National Addresses that have been formerly presented to His Majesty for allowing the Parliament to sit, to take Cognizance of this matter in particular, do sufficiently shew the Nation's great concern in so National an Interest.

I may therefore boldly Assert, that there was never any Session of Parliament so much desired as this, not from the results of whose Councils greater good or evil, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, could arise to the Nation.

In speaking then to this National Affair, it concerns us to lay aside Heats & Animosities, Picques & Jealousies, to the end that in a National concern there may at least appear a National Unity, and that what shall be done by this Honourable House thereupon, may be look'd upon by the Nation as the results of solid, and sound Reason and Reasoning, and not the effects and consequences of our too often fatal Picques and Passions.

Before I go to the detail of this Important Affair of *Caledonia*, I must look a little back, and that not only with consideration of the Motives & Reasons which did induce *Scotland* to promote an *African* & *Indian Trade*, but also with regard to these which have engaged the whole World to encourage and cherish Trade, & to Support and Protect Trading Companies in their just Rights and Priviledges.

My Lord, Of all the Changes and Revolutions that have been ever made in this World, those made by Trade have been the most Universal.

Kingdoms and Empires have had, and will have their Periods, but I think, I may safely say of Trade, that its Dominion is more extensive than either the *Roman* or *Græcian* ever were, so its Continuance and Duration shall be as long as Sun and Moon endureth, and the Reason is evident, because the Principles of the one are more certain and demonstrative than those of the other.

Trade, *My Lord,* hath even altered the Principles of Reason and Reasoning, for amongst some of the wisest *Græcians*, Poverty and Contempt of Riches were thought not only the best Shields of Defence, because not worth the Conquerors Pains, but also the best Weapons for Offence, because a Spur and Incitement to take from others what they wanted themselves; yet things are otherwise now, he whose Fortune it is to have the last Penny, if rightly managed and applied, he who can, by force of Money, make a Winter Campaign, encrease his Warlike Instruments most, yea, I may add, who can shoot most Silver-Ball, is sure to Conquer.

So that now it is not for Advantage and Profit only, that the World becomes Trading, but in Self-Defence and for Necessity, so that War it self is become a Trade, and *Mars* a Merchant.

My Lord; Not to trouble this Honourable House with the many probative Instances and Examples recorded in the Annals and Histories of all Nations, yea even seen by this Age, in relation to what I have said, I shall only instance one for all; and that is these of the Estates of *France*, as most proper for this Subject.

Henry the 4th. of *France*, a Valorous and Prudent Prince, being alarmed by the Union of the Two Crowns of *Scotland* and *England*, in the Person of King *James* the 6th. and being afraid, lest they should be joyned in Body, as well as Head, by which that Wise Prince did foresee much better, than we have yet been capable to do, the great Encrease of Trade and Power that would accrue to *Britain* by such

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an Union, did therefore, in the Year 1603, send over Monsieur *Rosny*, afterwards Duke of *Sully*, to *England*; his Publick Business was, to Congratulate King *James*, upon his Accession to the Crown of *England*, as his ancient Ally and Friend, and renew all former Leagues and Alliances between *France* and *Britain*: But under hand, as appears from *French History*, he was to endeavour all he could, to hinder any Union of the two Kingdoms in one Body Politick, yea tho' *France* and *Spain* were at that time in no very good Terms, yet their Ambassadors were ordered to joyn and unite, in stopping our Union: And if we will but reflect and consider, how saint King *James's* Endeavours were at the time, how many Quarrels and Animosities there were set on Foot betwixt the Courtiers of the one and the other Nation; yea how Cavalierly King *James* proceeded and decided, in a Conference between the Presbyterians and Church of *England*, concerning Ceremonies, (the then great Obstaole to an Union) and other things, we will be perswaded, these Forreign Princes made no Ceremony to Foment our Differences, as I think they always shall have the Interest to do, till our Divisions make us a Prey to the most potent of our Neighbours.

Monsieur *Rosny* was also instructed to make particular Enquiries, in relation to Manufactories and Shipping, and to engage several of the best Trades-Men to quite *England* for *France*, as they did.

After Monsieur *Rosny's* Return, there were many Manufactories, with large and ample Priviledges, set on Foot, both at *Paris*, *Orleans*, and several other places in *France*.

Thus the Foundation of Trade being laid by *Henry* the Great, it was further prosecuted by his Son, under the Prudent Conduct and Ministry of Cardinal *Richieu*, who, when made Guardian of the Sea, (as he says himself in his Political Testament, that *France* had not one Ship of War at Sea) what great Advance he made in a very few Years, is most admirable; he beat the *Spaniards* in a Sea Fight, and did settle the Mediterranean Trade to good Advantage, and by a Noble Act, he caused take off the Ignominy that Merchants lay under.

under, as not being under the Repute of Gentlemen: Cardinal *Massarine* did yet make it his Business to advance it further, I must confess, all must give place to what hath been done by this present Monarch.

My Lord, I shall not go to the Detail of it, in telling you the great Priviledges given to Trading Companies, with the Assistance of the Royal Treasure to the Boot, neither to what Height this Naval Power hath come to in a few Years, but shall only say; that we have seen *France* continue an Eight Years War almost against the United Power of *Europe* by Land, yea even by Sea, make no inconsiderable Figure, against the Formidable Force of *Spain*, *England* and *Holland*, and in my Opinion, with Advantage.

Having now spoken of the Necessity of Trade, to make a Kingdom Powerful in time of War, I shall next consider the special Care taken in all Treaties of Peace, to have it settled upon Advantageous Conditions, and that with a particular View, to our Supine Negligence, in the last Treaty of Peace at *Reswick*.

My Lord, At the Treaty of *Reswick* we find, in a very short time, all Matters relating to Conquests, Dominion, and Power were soon decided; the King of *France* restores to several Princes and Potentates large Territories, many strong and impregnable Cities and Forts: But when the Tariff came to be considered, that was a thing of such import, that it must take a longer time, therefore there must Commissioners meet upon it: And tho' there be three Years and more since the War ended, I know not yet, whether all things in relation to Trade be yet well adjusted; What Care our Parliament and Privy Council took, to have our Priviledges and Immunities in *France*, which were very great, considered and restored, is but too well known; and I am ashamed my self, to put them in Mind of their Negligence, only I must say, that by their Unconcernedness in the things of the Nation, and by our Kings being Strangers, and never residing with us, ever since the Union of the Two Crowns, we have neither been considered in Times of War
nor

nor Treaties of Peace; so that it is no wonder, if some Blundering Bullies, in both Houses of the Parliament of *England*, give us Names of Poverty, and worse.

During the late War, tho' we furnished a most considerable and valuable Number of Regiments, yet we had neither Name nor Post of Honour.

If any Noble Action was performed by *Scots-Men*, all was said to be done by the *English*; If we pretended to Precedency as Guards, Royal Regiments, or the like, we were then not *English*, that's in plain *English* nothing: For if *Scots*, we had as Just a Pretence of Competition with the *English*, as they had of Precedency over the *Dutch*.

In the Treaty of Peace, we were considered neither as Parties, Allies nor Auxiliaries; not as Party, because we had no Plenipotentiary there; not as Allies, because our distinct and National Privileges and Rights were not so much as under Consideration; not as Auxiliaries, because no previous Paction with our Nation; neither were we treated as the *Swissers*, and other Auxiliaries use to be; so that, upon the whole Matter, when it shall be asked, *Octavo quid retribuimus Anno?* I can give no better Answer, than what *Henry Wynd* got for his Valiant Fighting in the North-Inch of *St. Johnston*, in the Days of our King *Robert the Third*, which was Half a Crown, a Cott-House, and Maintainance for his Life; yea I think scarcely so much, considering the great Care that's taken, to purge and keep out our Countrey-Men from any Military Offices in *England*, and the little Care they have taken, to provide for the broken Officers of our Nation, who have served under their Name in *Flanders*.

But, *My Lord*, To come close to the Matter in hand, the great Hopes and Expectations we had, in carrying on a Trade to *Africa* and the *Indies*, the general Alacrity and Forwardness that appeared in Persons of all Ranks and Qualities to promote the same, made these Injuries pass then unregarded and unresented.

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My Lord, I must say, never any Nation in *Europe* provided a larger Stock for such an Undertaking at their first up-setting, never was any Project of Trade managed by Persons of greater Quality or Integrity, without any Charge to the Common Stock. Never was there a better Equipage of Ships and Men, with all things necessary for such a Design, and yet, by the Malice of our Enemies, all our Endeavours have proved unsuccessful and Abortive.

For no sooner we had an Act of Parliament, and His Majesty's Letters Patent thereupon, for carrying on a Trade to *Africa* and the *Indies*, tho' we were very Communicative to our Neighbours of *England* of all the Advantages that might arise in the Prosecution thereof.

I say, no sooner had our Act a Being, but all our Neighbours were alarmed with it, that as our Nation had that Honour never to be Conquer'd by the *Romans*, so they should have the Honour, to endeavour we should never be Conquer'd by Trade, which is as much as to say, That as things go now, we shall be Slaves for ever.

So our Act must be attacked in it's Swadling Cloaths, and persecuted in its Infancy, and that our dear Brethren of *England* might have the Honour to give us the deadly Blow at one Stroke, that there might be no need to strike again, they endeavoured to persuade our most Excellent and Gracious King, our Deliverer and Benefactor, under whose Protection and Countenance, we hoped to have done valiantly, I must say again, they endeavoured to persuade him, that he was ill served in *Scotland*, by the granting of that Act.

Not only so, but they arraigned the Act it self, put their own Glosses upon it, cited the *Scots* Commissioners before both their Houses, to give an Account of an Act pass'd in a *Scots* Parliament, impeached the Nominees before the Lords; and, as by their Votes and Addresses is evident, struck at the Independency of the Nation, through the Bowels of the Company, they rested not satisfied with all these Injuries, but pursued us to Forreign Countries, and most insolently

insolently and impudently, without Warrant from His Majesty, their Residents did not only attack the Company, but, by Consequence, the whole Trade of the Nation, and its Sovereignty, by their infamous Memorial at *Hamburg*.

When, notwithstanding of all their Malice, by the Firmness and Resolution of the Company, Equipments were forwarded, and under Sail for *America*, yet their wicked Designs over-run us, even to the New World, as if, of all the World, *Scotland* and *Scots-Men* were to be esteem'd the only Hereticks, for believing the *Antipodes*.

My Lord, The Barbarity and Inhumanity of these Proclamations, and the more Unnatural Prosecution of them, and that pretended to be done by His Majesty's Order, when the contrary is evident by the Warrants themselves, are such unpardonable Injuries and Affronts to the Law of Nature, the Law of Nations, and to us and our Company, that I want both Words and Names to express their Characters.

Yea indeed, *My Lord*, I must stop, for I find *Old Caledonia-Blood* too hot in my Veins, my Pulse beats too quick for my Tongue, my Heart is too large for my Breast, and my Choler for my Reason: Therefore, lest I offend this House by some indecent and angry Expressions, I shall come to the Application, only I must say, Let any *Scots-Man* eat this Book that's in my Hand, * and he shall find it as bitter as Gall in his Belly, as at present I find it in mine.

* The Printed Collection of all the Publick Papers relating to the Company.

The next thing then to be spoken unto, is what this High Court of Parliament, the Great Council of the Nation, will do in so Important and National Affairs.

My Lord, Its a Principle in Law, *Id possumus quod jure possumus*, and by this Principle, both in Justice, Law and Reason, we might lawfully do more than either we can, or should do, if we could.

But the Question now is, What in Prudence we ought to do, both for the Vindication of the Independency of our Kingdom and Nation, for the continuing and supporting our Company, in the Application

eration of the Act of Parliament, and for Satisfaction to the People, who are in a Ferment, because of such Mal-Treatments.

For Answer, I think our Resolutions may be reduced to Two Heads, the First is, That we declare against the Injuries done to us by the Two Houses of Parliament in *England*, and their Encroachments and Invasions upon the Independency and Sovereignty of the Nation, by their Actings and Proceedings, as also, that of the *Hamburg*-Memorial, and *West-India* Proclamations.

For the Second, That we assert *Scotland's* Right to, and the King of *Scotland's* Sovereignty over the Colony of *Caledonia*, in the *Isthmus* of *Darien* in *America*, as also, to ratify and approve the Application that the Company hath made by settling there, conform to the Act and Letters Patent thereupon.

For the First, it is so plain and evident, that I need not use Arguments with this Honourable House to perswade them: For the Second, it's evident not only Positively, but Negatively.

First Negatively, That the King of *Spain* had neither Right nor Possession is evident, and, to the Conviction of the World, made apparent by the Memorials, in Answer to those of the *Spanish* Ambassadour, given in by Two Eminent Lawyers here present, the Lord President and the Advocate.

Next Positively, Our Right is unquestionable, by the full and free Consent and Surrender of the Natives possessing, and having Right to the said Settlement, which are here lying in the Clerks Hands.

My Lord, Since these things are evident, I hope the Objection of our being dispossest'd will have no Weight with this Honourable House.

For what Man is there, that is illegally and violently dispossest'd of his Rightful Inheritance, that will not declare his Right before any competent Judicature, in order to his Re-possession. And I hope, the Representatives of the Nation will not be less diligent and active in a National Concern of the like Nature.

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Therefore I shall use no further Arguments, because I need not, I see Approbation and Attention in the Countenance of all the Members of this Honourable Court of Parliament, I shall then, for your Encouragement, conclude this Melancholly Theme, with a Hopeful Paralel taken out of our own History, and leave the Application to your selves.

The *Picts* being over-powered by their Neighbours, the *Brittons* demanded succour from the *Scots*, which they willingly afforded them; by their help, the *Brittons* were repulsed; so that the *Scots* and *Picts* Married, and gave in Marriage and lived like one People, in time the *Picts* and *Brittons* joyned together against the *Scots*, and were so successfull in their attempts, that they forced the *Scots* to abdicate old *Caledonia*: Did our Noble Predecessors give over thoughts or endeavour for their own re-establishment? No, for tho near 17 Years they wanted Possession, yet they made several unsuccessfull attempts, till at last there came a *Fergus* the Second, who reposses'd himself of his Rightfull Inheritance, and after him came a *Kenneth* the Third who rooted out the treacherous *Picts*: The *Romans* and *Danes*, conquered the *Brittons*, the *Danes* and *Normans* the *Saxons*, so that by the Providence of God, we are at this day the only *Ab-origines* of great *Brittain*.

Let us then, *My Lord*, imitate the *Mavortia Pectora* of our Noble Progenitors, and let us Remember we have a Warlike, Valiant and Noble King of the *Fergusian* Blood, and that we are of the Succession of our valiant Antecessors, and will be esteemed as such, if we imitate their example; and we know not as yet, where, or from whence a blessing may come.

Therefore, that in the mean time we may do our Duty, and go through the Affair in hand according to the Priority of time, I shall endeavour to make the first Proposal of a Resolve to this House and leave the rest to others, which I shall read here in my place, and give it in then to the Clerk. And it is this,

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Resolved, That the Votes and Proceedings of the Parliament of Eng-
land, and their Address presented to His Majesty in December 1695, in
relation to an Act of this Parliament establishing our Indian and African
Company, and the Address of the House of Lords presented to His Ma-
jesty in February last, were an undue intermeddling in the Affairs of this
Kingdom, and an Invasion upon the Sovereignty and Independence of our
King and Parliament.



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...wanted Position, they made several successful attempts, till
at last they came a little nearer the goal, when they were
of his Rightness, and that they were the only ones who
who rooted out the most dangerous Party, the House and I mean, con-
sidered the British, the Dutch, the French, the Spanish, to that
the Providence of God, we are at this day the only Possessors of
Great Britain.

Let us then, my Lord, imitate the glorious Actions of our Noble
Progenitors, and let us remember we have a Wallis, Valiant and
Noble King of the Foreign Blood, and that we are of the Succession
of our valiant Ancestors, and will be esteemed as such, if we imitate
their example; and we know not as yet, where, or from whence a
disturbance may come.

Therefore, that in the mean time we may do our Duty, and go
through the Affair in hand according to the Priority of time, I shall
endeavour to make the first Proposal of a Resolve to this House, and
leave the rest to others, which I shall read here in my place, and give
it in then to the Clerk. And it is this.